

# “Prayer That Works”

## 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13

Prayer is vitally important in our walk with Christ. Here Paul says a prayer for this young Thessalonian Church.

"Our prayers may be awkward. Our attempts may be feeble. But since the power of prayer is in the one who hears it and not in the one who says it, our prayers do make a difference." - Max Lucado

“When the devil sees a man or woman who really believes in prayer, who knows how to pray, and who really does pray, and, above all, when he sees a whole church on its face before God in prayer, he trembles as much as he ever did, for he knows that his day in that church or community is at an end.” - R.A. Torrey

Four principles for prayer that works:

### **1. THE PRAYER THAT WORKS IS A GOD CENTRED PRAYER (1 THESSALONIANS 3:11)**

#### **A. God Centred – Not man centred**

i. *Romans 11:36<sup>36</sup> For everything comes from him and exists by his power and is intended for his glory. All glory to him forever! Amen.*

#### **B. God Centred – Not any god but “our” God and “our” Lord Jesus**

i. *1 John 2:22–23<sup>22</sup> Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.<sup>23</sup> Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.*

ii. *John 5:23<sup>23</sup> that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.*

#### **C. God Centred – His Direction**

i. *LORDS PRAYER - Matthew 6:13<sup>13</sup> And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one...*

ii. *John 10:27<sup>27</sup> My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.*

iii. *Matthew 10:38<sup>38</sup> And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.*

iv. *Matthew 26:39<sup>39</sup> He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”*

## **2. THE PRAYER THAT WORKS IS A LOVE SATURATED PRAYER (1 THESSALONIANS 3:12)**

### **A. A prayer from love and a prayer for love**

- i. “There is nothing that makes us love a man so much as praying for him.” - William Law
- ii. *1 Peter 4:8<sup>8</sup> And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.”*
- iii. *1 Thessalonians 4:9 But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;*

### **B. You receive love, then give love.**

- i. *1 John 4:19<sup>19</sup> We love Him because He first loved us.*

## **3. THE PRAYER THAT WORKS IS A HEART STRENGTHENING PRAYER (1 THESSALONIANS 3:13)**

### **A. We need inner strength to fight outward battles.**

- i. *Ephesians 3:16–17<sup>16</sup> that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, <sup>17</sup> that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love...*
- ii. *2 Corinthians 4:16<sup>16</sup> Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.*

### **B. Holiness starts in the heart. It is inward change that leads to outward holiness.**

- i. *Mark 7:20–23<sup>20</sup> And He said, “What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. <sup>21</sup> For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, <sup>22</sup> thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. <sup>23</sup> All these evil things come from within and defile a man.”*
- ii. *Proverbs 4:23<sup>23</sup> Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.*
- iii. *Matthew 23:26<sup>26</sup> Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.*
- iv. *Hebrews 8:10<sup>10</sup> For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.*

## **4. THE PRAYER THAT WORKS IS A “JESUS IS COMING” PRAYER (1 THESSALONIANS 3:13)**

### **A. This puts perspective on the way we pray and the things we pray for.**

- i. Matthew 24:42–44 <sup>42</sup> Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. <sup>43</sup> But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. <sup>44</sup> Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.
- ii. 1 John 3:3 <sup>3</sup> And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

### **Growth Group Discussion Questions:**

- I've often heard the expression "Prayer changes things". Do you think this is true, and what does it mean?
- We learned that Prayer should be God centred and not man centred. What are some examples of man centred prayers?
- Have you ever had an experience when your attitude toward a person or a situation changed after prayer? If so, share a short testimony of this to the group.
- We saw that Paul prayed that their hearts would be established blameless in holiness (verse 13). What is the difference between inward holiness (the heart) and outward holiness (our behaviour)?
- "Jesus is coming back soon!" What difference does this statement make in our prayer lives?